of the couple among the Nambikwara. It is the economic and psychological unit par excellence. Not only among errant bands which are made and unmade unceasingly does the couple appear as the only stable reality (at least theoretically), but it is the couple alone which assures the subsistence of the members of the group. The Nambikwara live under a double economy: the economy of hunters and gardeners on one hand, the economy of collectors and gatherers on the other. The first is assured by the man, the second by the woman. While the masculine group departs for a whole day to hunt, armed with bows and arrows, or works in the gardens during the rainy season, the women, armed with digging implements, wander with their children across the plain, and gather, pull out, pick, capture, seize [55] everything on their route that is worthy of serving as food: grain, fruits, berries, roots, tubers, eggs, small animals of all sorts. At the end of the day, the couple meets around the fire. When the manioc is ripe, and as long as it remains so, the man brings a bundle of roots which the women pound and press to make a kind of pancake (uridnonu, al), and when the hunt has been fruitful, they rapidly cook pieces of small animals by burying them under the burning cinders of the family fire. But for seven months of the year, manioc is rare. As for the hunt, it is most often a matter of chance in these sterile sands where a skinny small animal hardly ever leaves the shade, and the pasture lands at the heads of rivers are separated from one another by considerable stretches of semi-desert brush. Thus, the family must most often subsist on the collection of the women. Very often we have attended (and sometimes shared) these diabolical doll-size snacks which, for the Nambikwara, for half the year, are the only hope of not dying of hunger. When the man, silent and fatigued, returns to camp and throws his bow and arrows which he could not use to one side, from the basket of the woman is extracted an extraordinary and moving collection: some orange fruit from the buriti palm (e[illegible]ru, al, e[illegible]nde, bl, [illegible]ola, c), two fat poisonous spiders (horaitu, al, kotende, bl), some tiny lizards' eggs and some of these animals (kattaterisu, al, nagade, bl, talitne, c), a bat, some small nuts from the bacaiuva palm (arookesu, al, kokoninde, bl), or nagnassu (aradikisu, al), a handful of grasshoppers (takedasu, al, tagare, bl, tasti, c). The pulpy fruits are crushed with the hands in a calabash filled with water, the nuts cracked with the blows of a stone, the animals and larvae buried pell-mell in the coals; and this repast is gaily devoured, a meal which would not be sufficient to satisfy the hunger of a white person, but which feeds a family here.

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The conversation becomes animated and laughter spreads. In the dark prairie the camp fires burn. Around the fire, the only protection against the cold which descends, behind the frail windbreak of palms [342] and branches hastily planted in the ground on the side where wind or [415] rain is expected; near the baskets filled with poor objects which constitute their whole earthly treasure; lying on the ground which extends around, haunted only by other bands equally hostile and fearful, the couples, embracing tightly, are truly seen as the support of one another, the comfort, the only help against the daily difficulties and the dreamy melancholy invades the Nambikwara soul from time to time. The visitor who camps in the brush with the Indians for the first time feels tenderness as well as anguish and pity before the spectacle of this humanity so completely unprotected; crushed, apparently against the soil of a hostile land by some implacable cataclysm; naked, shivering around the hesitant fires. He circulates tip-toe among the underbrush, in the dark, avoiding crushing in his walk a hand, an arm, a trunk, whose warm reflections are seen by the light of the fires. But this misery is animated by whispering and laughter. [56] The couples clasp one another as in the nostalgia of a lost union. Their caresses, at the same time tender and candid, are not interrupted by the passage of the stranger. One senses in all [157] of them an immense gentleness, a profound carelessness, a naive and charming animal satisfaction, and, emanating from all that, something like the most moving and credible expression of human tenderness.

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[517]
Thus it is not surprising that the attitude of the two sexes as concerns one another is characterized by intense interest. This interest is translated in certain cases by the vocabulary. In fact the Nambikwara have only one word to express "pretty" and "young," and a single word to signify "ugly" and "old" (munjene, jeʒene, bl). Their esthetic judgments are thus based essentially on human considerations, and above all, sexual ones. But the interest which is manifested between the sexes is of a complex nature. Men judge women in a mass, as being a little different from themselves. Depending on the situation, they consider them with desire, admiration, or tenderness. In itself the confusion of terms pointed out above constitutes permanent homage. But it must not be forgotten that the form of economic adaptation realized by sexual division of labor a capital role attributes to the women, since family life rests to a very large degree (probably the greatest) on the collecting of the women, but it represents an [83] inferior type of activity. The ideal life is conceived on the model of agricultural production or hunting. To have plenty of manioc, and

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sense of this term remains doubtful. And it has never been possible, in the course of the questions on kinship, to obtain from polygamous husbands discriminating terms for each of their wives.

595 established between the first wife and the new arrivals. The first
462 wife takes care of her children and devotes herself to the cares of
[252 the household, shredding the manioc and cooking the cumaru nuts.
263] She is occupied with feminine craft tasks. In short, she carries on her activities within the [61] limits of the sexual division of labor. The other wives aid her occasionally, but their main duty seems to be to assist their husband in his masculine tasks. They are comrades and collaborators who, in the general plan of the division of labor, could be more justifiably classed with the men. Their aid seems like a method on the part of the chief of the group to fulfill his heavy duties more easily, and like a psychological compensation for his responsibilities. When he leaves on a hunting or reconnoitering expedition, one of his polygamous wives accompanies him to hold his arrows and to carry in her basket the eventual prize. When he works around the camp or in the village, it is with their aid and com-
[515] pany. Although men and women do not bathe at the same time, one sometimes sees the husband and his polygamous wives take a bath together, the pretext for great struggles in the water, and innumerable
[832 jokes. In the evening he plays with them, either amorously, rolling
524] in the sand embracing two, three or four, or in a childlike way. For example A1, a3 and a4, stretched out on their backs, by way of making a star with three points on the ground, raise their feet in the air and knock them against one another, bottom of foot against bottom of foot, in a regular rythm (this game is described by the term eridaŋkitiu, al).

595 The polygamous union is thus presented as a super-imposition
● 182 of a plural form of amorous companionship on the monogamous marriage, and at the same time, we insist, as an attribute of command with a functional value from the psychological point of view as well as from the economic. The women usually live on very good terms, and although the first wife has a role that might seem a little unappreciated, working while she hears at her side the bursts of laughter of her husband and of his little mistresses, and sometimes even witnesses more tender frolicking, she does not show either bitterness or jealousy. In fact, this distribution of roles is not either unchangeable or rigorous, and, upon occasion, although rarely, the

595 husband and his first wife will also play, while bathing or near the
182 camp fire. She is in no way excluded from the gay life. Moreover, her slighter participation in relationships of amorous comradeship is compensated by a greater respectability and a certain authority over her young companions. It must not be forgotten (and we have
595 pointed it out in the study of the kinship system) that the polygamous
582 marriage presents a double aspect--the marriage of a man with a woman and with some "daughters" of the latter, or with a woman and the "sisters" of the latter. The respective situations of A1, a2 and a3 and a4 realize the two situations at the same time since, at least in one of the cases (with a4), it is the second oblique marriage within the same line. As example of the first type, we have the marriages of A32 and of A56; for the second type, one can also refer to the marriage of C20 (1).

1. Cf. above, p. 53.

595 The polygamous wives then, as a general rule, belong to a
571 younger generation. The first wife calls them "daughters" or of "little sisters," and they behave as such. A form of spontaneous grouping which one finds realized frequently is the union of the husband's daughters (by his first wife) and his young wives (polygamous). They form a sort of gay and carefree childlike society, but also a more or less subordinate society. We have found households comprised of two (A42, A57, A73, B1, B32, C20), three (A1,) and five (A32) wives. It does not seem that the number of wives is proportional to the social importance of the husband (even though polygamous union itself is conditioned by this), but is rather haphazard.

SEX LIFE

000 We shall begin by giving some information concerning organic activities.

514 Coughing, sneezing, spitting, blowing the nose, belching, ex-
515 pelling flatus, constitute operations which are not subject to any
576 etiquette, and which the vocabulary does not always clearly distinguish (thus: tolúrige, b1, to cough, and tolútiore, b2, to sneeze; kaáte, sneeze, and kasípe, c, spit, tarnikititu, a1, to expel flatus or to defecate). All of these needs are satisfied publicly, without precaution, ritual gesture or formula, as much on the part of the executor as on that of the spectators. No attention is paid to them, and everything

857 iõndage ʃutẽnturu kajãno kajãn kajãn hõte kajãnde ʃutẽntere kuajkano (b1).

When I am big, I shall catch the caetetu, caetetu, caetetu, the monkey, the caetetus, I shall kill them when it (the dog) barks.

[368] She makes an error in grammar which the father points out
857 laughingly: she should have said tilõdage, "when I am big,"
154 instead of the masculine form she used. The error is interesting, placed in context, which manifestly shows a feminine desire to raise the economic activities reserved for that sex to the level of those which are the men's privilege. As the exact sense of ʃutẽntere is "to kill by beating with a stick or club" (here, the digging stick), the informant tries unconsciously to identify [71] feminine collecting and gathering (which can only aim at the capture of small animals) with the masculine hunt, armed with bow and arrows.

593 The relationships between brothers and sisters have not given rise to any particular observation. In the central and southern group, one finds a special expression to designate the brother of the same sex, nlaõre, "the other one"; this term is not only applied to kinship relationships, but also designates objects be-
[342] longing to the same type. Thus the five or six poles planted obliquely which fan out from the center, and which hold up the
[534] first skeleton of the hut, are called indelẽaore; likewise, the double (kalõde) or triple (lutəndione) pipes or whistles. Friendly
857 groups are said to be "brothers" (1) also, and in discussions

1. See p. 92.

between adversaries they use the exclamation:

17. kakõtjane tãkənããtjane (b1).

Wicked one! You are no longer my brother!

[92] which indicates that among the Nambikwara the term "brother" has the same wide sense which it possesses in our vocabulary.
857 But in the heart of the infantile society, numerous attitudes take
182 form which prepare or advance later relationships. The orphan baby a9 spends nearly the whole day in the hands of her young sister a8 (one is 2 to 3 years old, the other 6 to 7). Her sister takes care of her, carries her, feeds her. a19 and a20 (who are "mothers") act like elders toward these two children, in a way more marked than the real difference in age calls for. In fact, a8 and a20 are contemporaries. The eldest, a19, cracks bacaiuva

857 nuts for her sister a20 and eats them with her. When they are
182 satisfied, they give the rest to a8, who cracks them, in turn, for her little sister.

857 The relationships between children giving each other the names husband and wife are more obscure, and we have not succeeded in forming a clear concept of them. We have pointed out a slight taboo exists concerning the expression of this kinship relationship. However, generally, the young "husbands" or "wives" do not manifest any special behavior toward one another, either positive or negative. Nevertheless, we have encountered indisputable cases where the young potential spouses conduct themselves as true spouses. In the evening they leave the family fire and carry burning pieces of wood to light their fire in a corner of the camp. The witnesses pay scarcely any attention to this action. For example, someone will make the remark:

18. ɯɾtnaɯri ɯɾraɨre :ɨɡahete ɯɾraɨena noɾẽteɯii etɨɾtere (b1).
The children are taking fire to make a fire, they blow to make flames.

[72] and the young "husband" says to his potential wife:

19. tadoõtakɯi nikɯitũteraɯi eɾʔere aituɾɯɯi ɯatadahaki (b1)
Bend down! Stir the fire, carry! Look (for more). Put it there!

857 After this, they install themselves near their fire and give
864 themselves over, insofar as it is within their means, to all the erotic acts that they have seen their elders practice. The incident is greeted by the adults with indifference, or, at the most, with amused smiles: ɯɨnó taminusere, "there are the children having little sexual relations," they say in passing. We have only verified these practices in a haphazard way among the young children (5 to 7 years). They seem to be absent among those nearer puberty, but, in the latter case, a lacuna appears in our observations, due to the lack of subjects for comparison.

857 As regards strangers, the attitude of children is quite variable.
609 Certain ones manifest fear and hostility for a long time:

20. taɯẽtte ʔiina ɨaʔirina uniena (b1)
My child is frightened, he is ashamed, he doesn't move.

sometimes explained by a surprising external detail:

herakəloɯi ɨɾena (b1)
he is afraid of glasses.

Others (or the same ones after several days or weeks of acclimatization) are curious, friendly, eventually mystifying. Thus,

605 But the relationship of "cross-cousins potentially or effectively allied by the marriage of their sister"—which seems to be the most adequate equivalent of the [77] term tarûte—can be extrapolated largely above and beyond family relationships. In certain cases, it is used to create, among individuals without relations, original ties whose role is to fuse, indirectly, in a same family group, groups formerly heterogenous. It was noted 621 at the beginning of this work (1) that the central and southern ●182 184

1. See p. 6.

groups have decreased quite considerably owing to the epidemics of the last fifteen years. Some of them have seen their power reduced to such a degree that the following of an independent social existence in such conditions might seem an illusory objective. Certain ones then grouped together in the hope of reconstituting a workable unity. Thus it is that when we found them the group designated under the title b1 (restricted), comprising 18 persons, and group c, comprising 34 persons, lived together, under the authority of their respective chiefs, but these working together. It is to be presumed also that the decrease in number was not the only reason for that alliance, and that group c represented a fraction of a more numerous group which it had been forced to flee for an undetermined reason. It probably sought greater security in the nomad's life shared with group b1. Some rather obscure events (2) which occurred

2. See p. 103.

during our stay let us glimpse the political background whose details we do not know. Whatever the case may be, the two groups traveled together, camped at the same times, but without mixing their fires, the constituent families forming two adjacent agglomerations. The most surprising trait of this or- [91] ganization was that the two groups did not speak the same language and could not communicate with one another except through one or two individuals belonging to each group who acted as interpreters. Notably, no direct communication existed between B1, chief of the Tarundé, and his colleague C20, chief and shaman of group Sabané. In fact, if there is

In fact, if there is
621 no doubt concerning the close affinity of dialects a1, a2, b1 and b2,
[197] which do not differ among themselves except as the derivations
182 of a mother language, dialect c offers, as regards the preceding,
184 such profound differences that one does not know if one is in the presence of a language of the same family. In any case, in whatever way linguistic study might resolve this problem, it can be reasonably set forth. We do not hesitate, nevertheless (and in spite of anthropological differences), to place group c in the cultural family of the Nambikwara, because of the identity of material culture and way of life, and especially because of the psychological attitude of groups b1, b2 and c as regards one another, who ostensibly recognize their community.

621 The union of the two groups posed a problem, that of the
605 nature of the relationships which would go on between their respective members. This problem [78] has been resolved by the recognition of all male members of group c as being "cross-cousins"—tarũte, of all the adult males of group b1, and of all the adult males of group b1 as being the jõpa (corresponding to "cross-cousin" in the vocabulary of parentage of group c) of all the adult males of group c. The result, consequently, is that if all the husbands of the two groups are "brothers-in-law among themselves," all the "wives" of a group are "sisters" of the husbands of the other, and all the children of both sexes, in a group, potential husbands or wives of the infants of the other group belonging to the opposite sex. The blood fusion of the two groups is thus definitely assured for the following generation. Here is a type situation which one finds thus realized:

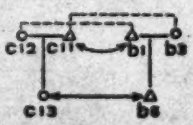

Fig. 18.

The systematic character of this solution is not doubtful. The informants belonging to group b or to group c, when we interrogated them concerning their kinship relationship regarding a male adult of the allied group, never furnished us with a special answer concerning the considered case, but remarked

836 who seem to be susceptible to violent passions. We knew an Indian who fled with a Paressi Indian girl during our stay, and lived with her for several months hidden in the bush and fleeing the husband who was in hot pursuit after them. Here is the way an informant (B15) tells of a former adventure. He reconstructs a dialogue with the beloved woman:

51. ajndarinjẽ — otendnjẽ — ajdoteha ajdakanjajni sutnadajẽ ajrhajtasjindige tamintednjẽ (b1)
Do you want to make love?--I do not wish to.--You are worth nothing! I want to make love or I will kill you! Let us go make love.

Very anxiously the woman responds:

higekanhjẽ uairirẽ uairidednjẽ etjẽdahẽ dungrajeni (b1)
Do it quickly, my husband will be angry, he will beat me.

684 626 There is no social sanction against adultery; but the wronged husband can avenge himself in a fearful manner and in circumstances of this type poison, used either against the wife or against the lover, plays its role. In order to avoid such incidents, the companions intervene between the adversaries and counsel the seducer to disappear for a while:

52. ijehetnjẽ ajkuakatednjãni ekuude ekuude ekuude ekuude ekuude ekuude ekuude ekuude ekuude kajãdodni uaiknoreniani (b1)
Go away.--I am going far away.--When this moon is ended and that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, then, in that one, you may return.

We knew an Indian (C11) whose wife disappeared one day, having left with a member of his group. He thought first of revenge, but his companions intervened, and it was finally decided that the lover should keep the wife and would give him a dog as compensation. Several months later, the lover died (we were not able to find out whether the death was normal or accidental), and the woman returned to her husband, who said he was very happy to have acquired the dog [562] also. This story should not be interpreted in the sense of an equivalence, conceived by the Indian spirit, between a woman and a dog. We have insisted too much on the fundamental role of the woman in Nambikwara [182] life to have to return to that here. But in groups where trade [112] exists in such a primitive form (1) exchanges of goods have as a

1. Cf. p. 93 f.

684 626 [182] conscious function the bringing of psychological compensations incommensurable among themselves, rather than for establishing equivalences of value.

764 184 The Nambikwara have two types of burial. The eastern groups practice double interment. The bodies are first placed in a crouching position (ãriuaerekititu, a1) in a circular ditch (sinitakurisu, a1) seven feet deep heaped up with earth and branches. For two months, they sing, dance and weep around this provisional tomb, until the body is decomposed. Then the bones are carried to the river where they are carefully washed. Then they are carried in [768] a cloth to be permanently buried in the village. The village is then abandoned, but the site is often visited:

53. auregande aŝunikere kadukərage iaudrige ende ende ende inare inaretaire şinoribate (b1)
to dig the grave, to close it, to wait one moon, one moon, one moon, to take out the bones, to bury them in the village.

In the central groups, on the other hand, the bodies would be buried (aotʔenikere, b1) in a prone position (idtarige, b1).

The funeral rites distinguish between movable goods and immovable goods. The first are carefully destroyed; they break and burn the weapons; they unravel the beads and necklaces.

[768] The garden of the dead man, if he cultivated one, is, however, only abandoned, and can be reclaimed later:

54. doŝore dutige adrede autadatige audotahãmdige audotaãmde odenehe'ire odunhi'nde niaotumnie narainidande naraidutige aireduge'ottige den den den nagiaode aire dugiotige tiatugiotige (b1)
The arrows are broken, everything must be broken the beads are unstrung, the beads of the deceased, the fields of the deceased are abandoned one moon, one moon, one moon, and when all is forgotten, another takes the field.

423 Yet it is necessary to avoid confusion on this point. Strictly speaking, there is no land property among the Nambikwara. The chief invites his men to group together to cultivate the gardens, but sometimes such and such an individual decides to clear a field on his own account. These personal appropriations do not give rise to any incidents since the cultivatable land is usually far larger than the collective needs. However, a garden represents a value, because of the considerable amount of work spent in clearing it, especially for people who have never seen metal tools until 30 years ago. Also the rule of destruction of the goods of the deceased respects the

of the Beyond, and condemned to nothingness after death like non-initiated babies. We have described the tender companionship which presides in the relationships between the sexes, and the general harmony which reigns within the groups. But when these are altered, it is to give way to the most extreme solutions, poisoning and murder. It is quite reasonable for the informants to underline spontaneously the role of forgetfulness in funeral rites. (3)

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3. P. 112.

For there is a striking contrast between the joyous irony with which one answers someone who is ignorant enough to inquire about a relative deceased for quite awhile: "ihitu, ihetu" (a1), "to the sand! in the sand!," and the horrible apparition of the atasu which is evoked with ritual sobbing.

Nambikwara rites do not seem to be symbolic in any way. The skeleton-like state of A21 and a22 at the end of the period of abstinence testifies to that, and although ceremonies are rare, they are carried far. The informants speak of periods of three months for the isolation of the young girl entering puberty, and of a bath in the river lasting a whole night as a preliminary to marriage. However much behavior is supple and without complication in daily life, likewise intrusions of the supernatural (in visions and revelations, the séances of shamanism, war dances, etc.) are manifested by the transition to an atmosphere of tragedy. No South American group, to our knowledge, expresses in such a sincere and spontaneous way (for one never feels the theatrical atmosphere of Tupi or chaqueno shamanism) such violent and opposed sentiments, whose individual expression seems inseparable from a social stylization which never betrays them.

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It is far from us to wish to assign an exclusively economic cause to this dualism. Nevertheless, it is astonishing to consider that the psychological dualism goes on an equal footing with the organization of social existence around [127] two opposite poles, on the one hand the sedentary life, agricultural, based on the dual masculine activity of the construction of huts and of gardening; on the other hand, the nomadic period, during which subsistence is principally assured by feminine collecting and gathering, the one representing alimentary security and well-being, the other chance and want. To these two ways of life, one followed in the winter, the other in the summer, the Nambikwara react in very different ways. They speak of the former with the melancholy which is attached to the conscious and resigned acceptance of the human condition, to the dull repetition of identical acts.

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While they speak of the latter with the excitement, and the almost exalted tone, of discovery. Let us listen to an informant (B1) describe the double cycle of the year:

First the sedentary life:

67. nedəntãtage kanaadau hãindige uedəntãnkero, uatliriʔkero
Tomorrow go hunting come back again
uakuiʔnikero dãnkero undãkero
cook again go to bed again sleep again
naingiʔkero airelõkero aikəŋkero
day again go to the field again cultivate the field again
aingəŋkero ãamkərə nunãkero uininũnkero
cultivate again leave again eat again
nangiʔkero danunkero tacrige tãu tãu tãu
another day cut wood cut cut cut
telunũkero [telõndige] mbãri mbãri mbãri
finish again wait wait wait
sorũmkero ŝutnunãtaue [ŝutnũkero] liʔnutiet
burn again the cold comes [still the cold] plants
demũnkero uaɣaariʔanunkero uaaninũnkero
to go again looking for some return again
iraãkero kakuãidnatue [kaikuãnde] hiʔkərage kũkero
plant much dig again
ikəranukutige liʔnuraʔnkero
in order to plant dig plants cut again
telõndãmkero dẽinterituapũmkero aurhãikero
finish again live a long time again pull up the roots
etuʔiʔ etuiʔ etuʔiʔ hãnkero
grateli grateli grateli finish again
nlakərahinkero nkuãulakərahiʔnkero ãtlakero hĩnkero
guãtau hikəninuni (b1)
a new field again plant again

And now the great adventure of the nomadic period:

68. inkənahaire miʔuere ɾrige
We leave at dawn; [the basket] is made it waits.
[128] ãgərage tuatũrige tua tuikiniʔnkero ɾʔkəro
one packs; one fills the basket in the woods one travels one travels
nahoreda õkero nlaidiʔnkero ntoraiʔnkero ãinkero
one comes to the water one crosses the water one crosses on the way
ãinkero alorekidiʔrekərə aloraiɾiʔkərə
on the way! one takes the prairie one crosses the prairie

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ajtuaginiⁿkəro (in) ʃiⁿhun lomãniⁿnkəro ajkəro
in the forest one travels again the hill one goes down travel
ajkəro ajkəro ajritigəmãniⁿnkəro mãgəlaniⁿnkero
travel travel the hill one goes up the hill one crosses
kəlakəlatiniⁿnkəro erəlorãniⁿnkəro ajrikəro
at the crest one travels one goes down another hill, more walking!
ʃikit(a)tittaⁿrige hajtlikəro ʃikitakãlikəro
In the wet sand travel in the wet sand travel
ʃeinlikəro herhaninuⁿnkəro nungeniⁿnkero
one passes the hut of other people traveling meets others
uelikaⁿmunde ʃiitliⁿtte (b1)
one is united with others here are the huts.

As is seen, the two forms of existence not are only very strikingly opposed from the economic and sociological point of view. They constitute two poles around which accumulate complex ensembles of emotions, sentiments and memories. With the same tenderness with which they caress their wives, the men evoke the type of life defined by the temporary shelter and the eternal basket, where the most incongruous means of subsistence are sparingly scraped, gathered together, caught each day, where one lives cruelly exposed to wind, cold and rain, and which leaves no more lasting trace than the souls of the women, dispersed by the wind and storms, on whose activity it essentially reposes. And almost like the reign of need is opposed to that of liberty, they conceive in a completely different aspect the sedentary life (whose specific and ancient character is still borne witness to the original species which they cultivate), but upon which the unchangeable chain of agricultural operations confers the same character of perpetuity as the reincarnated masculine souls, the durable house of winter time, and the cultivable land which will begin to live and to produce "when the death of its preceding cultivator shall be forgotten." (1) We do not think it possible to draw conclusions, from a work

1. Cf. quotation, p. 112.

having to do exclusively with several sociological and psychological aspects of the life of the Nambikwara, relative to the place one should assign them in the ensemble of South-American cultures. However, the preceding information suffices to show under what form the problem is posed. We are in [129] the presence of a culture which shows linguistic affinities with the Ŝibŝa, and which approaches the Tupi from the double point of view of family organization and religious beliefs, at the same time recalling

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the Gé and the Botocudo in its material culture. (1) In other terms, it

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1. We do not mention the Botocudo by chance. The term "Nambikwara" seems to be a surname of Tupi origin, with the sense of "large ears" (Nhambikwara). However, the Indians who use this name do not use the "bodoque" or any other ornament bringing on the same malformation. Yet it is possible that the name was originally applied to a tribe—or group of tribes—different from that which finally inherited it. In 1931, the telegraph post of Parecis, located 80 kilometers from Diamantino, was attacked and destroyed by some unknown Indians, who descended from an unexplored region somewhere between the Ariños River and the do Sangre River. Since that time, they have repeated their sorties at irregular intervals, so that it was necessary to change the trail going to Utiarity (on the Papagaio River)about 80 kilometers to the south of the telegraph line. The fires of Indian camps were clearly visible at the time of our passage to Parecis, in January 1939. Thanks to two severed heads, brought back a number of years ago by some garimpeiros (searchers of diamonds) who had a bone to pick with these Indians, it is known that the latter wear in the lobe of the ear and in the lower lip some large disks of light wood which recall those of the Suia and Botocudo. For this reason then, they are now called, by the diamond seekers and the gatherers of rubber of the region, by the name of Beiços de Pau, "Mouths of wood." The story is surprising, for people up to then were convinced that the Paressi had remained the sole occupants of these territories, and they themselves seemed completely ignorant of the presence of these dangerous neighbors. We have not found in literature any reference to the "Beiços de Pau" since the beginning of the 18th century; but at that time there is precise testimony: "Further on there is another tribe called Mahibarez... their language differs only slightly (from that of the Paressi), and they have ears with very long pierced lobes which in some of them hang to the shoulder, these being neighbors of the Paressi... and moreover they carry some short swords made from very strong wood... This people lives toward the northern part"

(Antonio Pires de Campos, "Breve noticia, etc.," Revista do Instituto Historico e Geographico Brasileiro, Vol. 25, 1862, p. 445). Cf. also C. Lévi-Strauss, "The name of the Nambikuara," American Anthropologist, Vol. 47, 1945. 101

is the problem of a syncretistic culture which one finds so frequently in South American ethnology. 157 182

When taken from the geographical point of view, the statement of the problem is easily reconstituted. One may ask one how best to interpret the presence of a nucleus of low cultures placed symmetrically, as regards the tributaries of the right bank of the Amazon, to that which occupied, and still occupies, eastern Brazil. Under the two wings of the "T" which sketches the distribution of far more evolved cultures of the Amazon valley, and the Madeira, with the long vertical zone which extends from the Xingu to the Tocantins, the low level Gé to the east, and the Nambikwara to the west, produce an equilibrium, like isolated islands. In the case of the Nambikwara, a supplementary problem is raised, that of the duality of their culture and their type of life. The latter can be explained either by taking as a basis the most elementary form of adaptation, and by assuming the borrowing of agricultural life from groups of a more evolved culture, or by leaving the higher form as an impoverishment determined by cultural isolation, or by the [130] suppression in particularly inhospitable regions which would have imposed secondary forms of adaptation. However, it is only by an appeal to all the available sources of information which should include, besides sociological studies, the study of the language and the material culture, and by comparison with the groups living in the same geographic atmosphere, that an attempt to interpret these problems can reasonably be undertaken. 121

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corded among many tribes. Now, what do we find in the chief's case? There is first a monogamous marriage of the cross-cousin type, that is, where the wife belongs to the same generation as her husband. This first wife plays the same part as the monogamous wife in ordinary marriages. She follows the sexual pattern of the division of labor, taking care of the children, doing the cooking, and collecting and gathering wild food. To this marriage are added one or several unions, which, technic[illegible], are true marriages, but of a different type. Usually, the secondary wives belong to a younger generation. The first wife calls them daughters or nieces. Besides, they do not follow the sexual pattern of the division of labor, but share indifferently in men's or women's activities. At the camp, they disdain domestic tasks and remain idle, either playing with the children to whose generation they belong or [illegible]ng with their husband, while the first wife keeps busy with the food and the fire. On the contrary, when the chief leaves on an exploration, a hunt, or some other manly task, they will accompany him and bring him their moral and physical help. These somewhat "tomboy" girls, elected by the chief from among the prettiest and healthiest of the group, are to him rather "girl-friends" than spouses. They live on the basis of an amorous friendship which contrasts strongly with the more conjugal atmosphere of the first marriage.

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This system exerts a tremendous influence upon the whole life of the group. The periodical withdrawal by the chief of young women from the regular cycle of marriages creates a permanent unbalance within the group, between the number of boys and girls of marriageable age. Young men are the chief victims of that situation and must either remain bachelors for several years or marry widows or old women discarded by their husbands. Thus, the right to plural marriages represents a concession of considerable importance made by the group to its leader. What does it mean from the latter's point of view? There is little doubt that access to young and pretty girls brings him a much appreciated gratification, not so much from the physical side (as the Nambikuara share in the quiet dispositions of most South American tribes), as from the psychological and sentimental one. But, above all, plural marriage, together with its distinctive features, constitutes the technical means and the functional device placed at the chief's disposal by the group to enable him to carry out his exacting duties. Left by himself, he could hardly do more than the others. His secondary wives, freed by their special status from the customary

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622 595 182 liabilities of their sex, are his helpers, comforters and assistants. They are, at the same time, leadership's prize and instrument. Can it be said, from the native point of view, that the prize is worth the trouble? To answer that question, I shall now have to consider the problem from a broader angle, namely, what does this elementary social structure, the Nambikuara band, teach us about leadership, its basis and its function?

121 There is a first point which does not require great elaboration. Nambikuara data contribute, with many others, to destroy the belief originated by early anthropologists, and temporarily revived by psychoanalysis, that the primitive chief could find his prototype in a symbolical father, and that the simpler forms of the State could progressively have grown out of the family. We have found at the root of the crudest forms of chieftainship a decisive step, which introduced something entirely new in respect to biological relations—and this step consists of *consent*. Consent, we have seen, is at the same time the origin and the limit of leadership. Unilateral relations such as right of age, autocratic power, or others, may appear in groups having an already complex structure. In simple forms of social organization, such as the one I have tried to describe, they are inconceivable. Here, on the contrary, the relationship between the chief and the group can be seen as a perpetual process of arbitration where the chief's talents and authority on the one hand and the group's size, cohesion and willingness, on the other, constantly react on and influence each other. If I had the time, and if it were not so far removed from my topic, I would have liked to show what considerable support modern anthropological observations bring, in this respect, to the analysis of the eighteenth century social philosophers. I am well aware of the fact that Rousseau's "social contract," which is the step by which individuals resign their autonomy in favor of the General Will, is entirely different from the nearly contractual relations existing between the chief and his followers. It remains true, however, that Rousseau and his contemporaries displayed a keen sociological feeling when they understood that cultural attitudes and elements such as "contract" and "consent" are not the result of secondary processes, as claimed by their opponents; they are culture's raw materials, and it is impossible to conceive a political or social organization in which they would not already be present. If I understand correctly, the recent analysis, by modern American